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PITTSBURGH STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

summer
THEATRE

NUNSENSE

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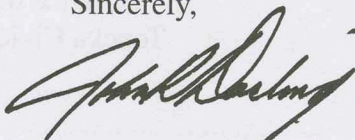
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Dear Friends:

Let me welcome each of you to the return of *Summer Theatre* to the campus of Pittsburg State University. We are extremely excited that we are performing again during the summer at Pittsburg State and presenting outstanding entertainment to the entire community of Pittsburg as well as the surrounding area.

The selections of "Nunsense," "Life Is a Cab-Away," and "Blood Brothers" promise to provide us a refreshing variety of entertainment. Thank you for joining us and supporting such a fine program. We look forward to many more Summer Theatre productions!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Darling", written in a cursive style.

John R. Darling
President

*PSU Summer Theatre gives a special thank you
to the following organizations and individuals:*

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Musicians and Technicians

Nunsense Band & Life is a Cab Away Band

Susan Laushman	Conductor, Keyboards
Jennifer Sager	Trumpet
Roger Scantlin	Woodwinds
Matt Schmitt	Bass
Bob Laushman	Percussion

Blood Brothers Band

Susan Laushman	Conductor, Keyboards
Roger Scantlin	Woodwinds
Matt Schmitt	Bass
Bob Laushman	Percussion

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Matt Hinton	Sandra Miller
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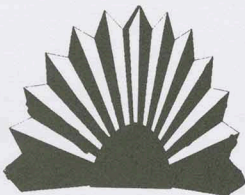
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presents

NUNSENSE

A Musical Comedy
Book, Music and Lyrics by
DAN GOGGIN

Directed by:
Barry R. Bengtsen

Musical Director:
Susan Laushman

Choreography by:
Cherie Lawson

Assistant Choreographer:
Noah Fleischaker

July 15, 16, 17, 27, 28, and 29

TIME: The Present
PLACE: Pittsburg State University

MUSICAL NUMBERS
ACT ONE

Nunsense is Habit-Forming Cast
A Difficult Transition Cast
Benedicite Sr. Mary Leo
The Biggest Ain't the Best Srs. Hubert and Leo
Playing Second Fiddle Sr. Robert Anne
So You Want to Be a Nun Sr. Mary Amnesia
Turn Up the Spotlight Sr. Mary Regina
Lilacs Bring Back Memories Srs. Regina, Hubert, Leo & Amnesia
Tackle That Temptation with a Time Step Sr. Mary Hubert and Cast

ACT TWO

Growing Up Catholic Srs. Robert Anne, Leo, Hubert & Amnesia
We've Got to Clean Out the Freezer Cast
Just a Coupl'a Sisters Srs. Regina and Hubert
Soup's On Sr. Mary Leo
Playing Second Fiddle (Reprise) Sr. Robert Anne
I Just Want to Be a Star Sr. Robert Anne
The Drive In Srs. Robert Anne, Amnesia & Leo
I Could've Gone to Nashville Sr. Mary Amnesia
Gloria in Excelsis Deo Cast
Holier Than Thou Sr. Mary Hubert & Cast
Nunsense is Habit Forming (Reprise) Cast

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Who's Who in the Cast

SISTER MARY REGINA, the beloved Mother Superior of the Little Sisters of the Balkans, is originally from Lac du Plaine, a small-ish town in southern Indiana. She headed the pioneering group of religious who established the leper colony in the Mediterranean and later returned to Pittsburg, Kansas as Superior General of the Order. After *Nunsense*, Mother Superior says she has no desire to continue in the theatre. But rumor has it that she would consider doing national commercials or a television series to raise money for the Order. Prior to taking her vows, Sister Mary Regina was Alice Hilt. She appeared as Ruth in *Pirates of Penzance* and Grandma Kurnitz in *Lost in Yonkers*.

SISTER MARY HUBERT entered the Little Sisters of the Balkans upon graduation from Precious Blood Elementary School. Sister currently serves the Order as Mistress of Novices, training new recruits. Her position is not unlike a drill sergeant, however, she is the first to point out that her approach is more gentle—but firm. Sister is a little “off-the-wall” at times but this has been attributed to the fact that she was trampled by a camel that went berserk during the annual nativity pageant held in the leper colony. (She was portraying one of the three wise men.) Sister Mary Hubert is the former Elaina Allison. Miss Allison was seen in *Revenge of the Space Pandas* and Nell in the award winning PSU production of *Endgame*.

SISTER MARY ROBERT ANNE was a child of a disadvantaged Brooklyn family. After dropping out of Verna's Cashier School, Reverend Mother took pity on poor little Barbara Hilt and accepted her in the Little Sisters of the Balkans, where she became Sister Mary Robert Anne. Today she is one of the most popular sisters with Pittsburg's kids because she speaks their language. Reverend Mother regrets the fact that a lot of this language is unprintable. Sister Robert Anne had a very checkered career prior to entering the convent, including acting stints in *Fiddler on the Roof* as Yente and Kay Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. The nuns rarely discuss Barbara's erratic driving skills.

SISTER MARY AMNESIA is truly a lost soul. She arrived at the convent in her habit without a clue as to her identity. . . recalling only that a crucifix fell on her head. It has been said that she resembles Michelle Thornbury, who learned ventriloquism when she became a Little Sister of the Balkans and previously with the Louisburg Council of the Arts production of *West Side Story*, playing Maria, and Sally in *Die Fledermaus*.

SISTER MARY LEO came to the order from a South Dakota farm. She entered the convent to dedicate her life to God through the dance. Many people think that she took her name from the famous “leotard,” but that is not



Mary Regina



Mary Hubert



Mary Leo



Mary Robert Anne



Mary Amnesia

true. She is named after her Uncle Leo, a notorious Sioux Falls gangster. Sister thought that by taking his name, the Lord would go easy on him. She is a novice and has much to learn. Before joining the Order, Sister was known as Alicia Potter, who tested her dancing ability by appearing in the Jody Phillips Dance Company and as an on-air personality at 96.9 FM, The Cow. Prior to taking her vow of poverty, Sister supported herself by portraying Annie Oakley in the famous *Guns of the Black Hills* Pageant in Spearfish, South Dakota.

DAN GOGGIN (Writer) conceived the idea for the musical *Nunsense* after the phenomenal success of the Nunsense greeting card line, which he created with Marilyn Farina. Dan has also written scores for the Off-Broadway musical *Hark*; the Broadway production *Legend*, starring Elizabeth Ashley and F. Murray Abraham; *Seven* starring Jane White; the musical *A One-Way Ticket to Broadway*; and two revues: *Because We're Decadent* and *Something for Everybody's Mother*. Dan has applied for admission to the Little Order of the Balkans, but Sister Mary Regina says she is much too busy with *Nunsense* to answer any letters now.

BARRY BENGTSEN (Director) was released from his vows as Brother Futon Fouette. This occurred after the Bishop discovered that Brother Futon had used his habit as a parachute to jump from a jetliner onto a burning building, where he single-handedly saved 300 pounds of uncut cocaine from the flames, giving rise to his favorite expression: "Come fly with me!" Since then, as Barry Bengtson, he has directed and designed for Pittsburg State University for the past 27 years. *Peace*.

SISTER MARY THOMAS (Musical Director) is our convent musician. She was part of the original contingent who established the leper colony served by the Order. Sister achieved much notoriety when she published her first music book, *Two Part Inventions for the Fingerless*, which she dedicated to the lepers. Sister Mary Thomas has helped the Order enormously by taking her talent outside the convent wall as Susan Laushman. She has provided musical instruction on stage and in the classroom for music lovers of all ages in the community.

SISTER MARY TALLCHIEF (Choreographer) is the assistant prioress of the Little Sisters of the Balkans. She was originally a sister in the Convent of Our Lady of Dallas, but was asked to leave after shouting "Again, please!" during Grand Silence. Sister Mary Tallchief was given the job of choreographing *Nunsense* as a penance for past sins committed as a teacher at the local YMCA. Formerly known as Cherie Lawson, she owns her own studio in Joplin, and teaches dance in Pittsburg, as well.

BROTHER ROBERT MARCUS is an "altar person" at the Convent. Although his main experience is in lighting candles, Reverend Mother feels that his "light footwork" deserves credit too. No one mentions the strange fire started in the changing room—at least to his face. In a former life he was known as Noah Fleischaker.



Nunsense in rehearsal.





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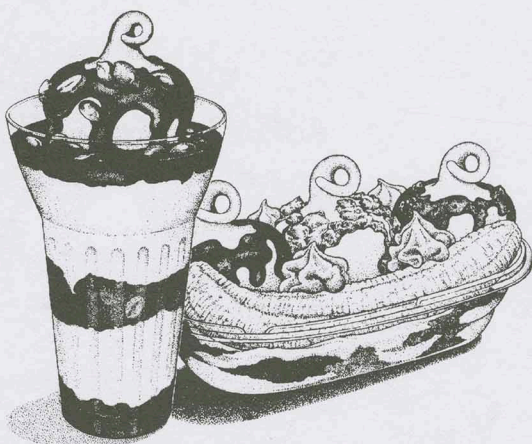
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— Noël Coward

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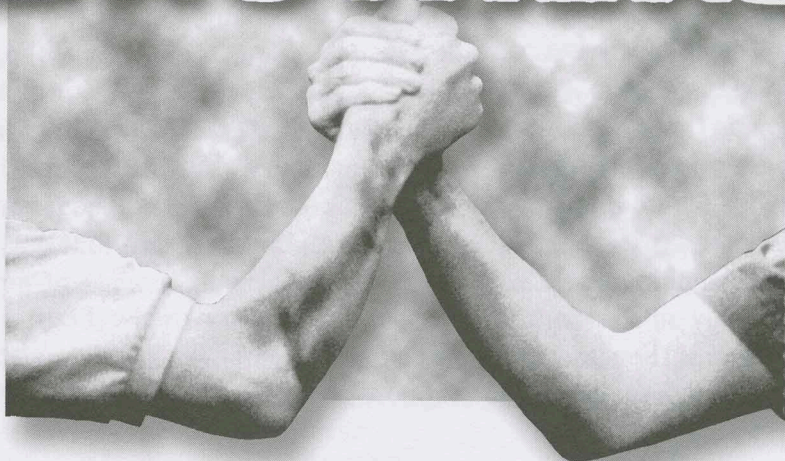
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BLOOD BROTHERS



by Willy Russell

Directed by
John Green

Musical Director
Susan Laushmann

July 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 30 and 31

Cast

Narrator	Jas Abramowitz
Mrs. Johnstone	Lael Meats
Mickey (a twin)	John Kerney
Edward (a twin)	Duke Walter
Sammy	Jason Blick
Linda	Shelli Baugh
Mrs. Lyons	Renee McCartney
Mr. Lyons	Fred Murphy
Repro Man, detective	Andy Billingsley
Repro Man, teacher	Don Bonjour
Policeman	Jon Matson
Donna Marie, Miss Jones	Kati Michel
The twins (as Infants)	Evan & Chelsie Grantham
Edward's dog	Uncorked Merlot Laushman
Kids & Neighbours	The Cast

The action of the play takes place in and around a small industrial town, and in the surrounding countryside. The time is the present.



Blood Brothers in rehearsal.

Willy Russell was born in Whiston near Liverpool (England) and left school at fifteen. He went through a succession of jobs before, at the age of twenty, he decided to become a teacher. At about the same time he saw John McGrath's play, *Unruly Elements*, at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, and decided he wanted to become a playwright. Since then he has written *Blind Scouse* (1972), *John Paul George Ringo . . . and Bert* (1974), winner of the London Theatre Critic's award for Best Musical; *Breezblock Park* (1975); *One for the Road* (1978); *Stags and Hens* (1978), and *Educating Rita* (1980), winner of the Society of West End Theatres' award for Best Comedy; made into a film for which Russell wrote the screenplay, directed by Lewis Gilbert and starring Michael Caine and Julie Walters (1983). His 1986 stage hit *Shirley Valentine* was made into a film in 1987, with Russell again writing the screenplay. He has also written numerous plays for television. In June 1983 the Open University awarded him an Honorary M.A. in recognition of his work as a playwright.

Russell's 1983 musical *Blood Brothers* was first staged at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, before transferring to London's West End in 1988, where it has been performed for the last nine years, garnering numerous awards in the process. It was staged on Broadway in 1990 and a number of touring productions have played the length and breadth of the United States.

This PSU production of *Blood Brothers* is the first in Southeast Kansas. Nothing from the original has been cut, although a number of regional English colloquialisms have been Americanized for ease of understanding, and in order to highlight the universality of the themes dealt with in this brave, angry, and utterly unique piece of music theatre.

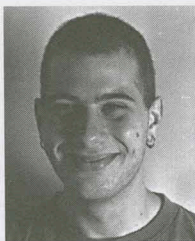
John Green



Lael Meats



Renee McCartney



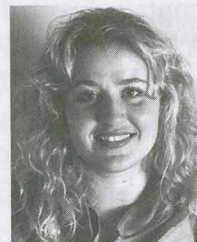
Jas Abramowitz



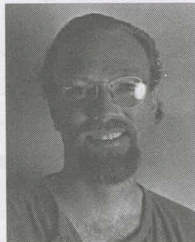
Duke Walter



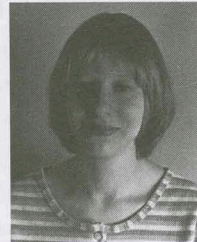
John Kerney



Shelli Baugh



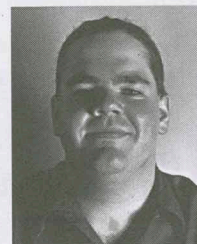
Fred Murphy



Kati Michel



Jason Blick



Jon Matson



Andy Billingsley



Don Bonjour



Uncorked Merlot
Laushman

"It is plain that the composer does not know a crotchet from a hatchet though I would readily concede that armed with a hatchet Mr. Russell could do no worse damage than he can with a crotchet."

In the morning, bogeyed and trembling, staggering down to the kitchen to find the kids already up, dressed for school, attacking Coco-Pops and each other. And through it all, inside, I'm composing my defense speech for when I come to stand in the Court of Musical Crimes, accused of TRYING TO WRITE A MUSICAL, facing a jury which includes the Gershwins, Mr. Sondheim, Kern, Porter, Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Lloyd Webber and all their collaborators. I hardly notice that the kids have signed the day's first cease-fire, that they're ready and on their way out to school, that I've given them the wrong packed lunch or the right dinner money, swimming costumes and contributions to the school's Better Housing for Hamsters Fund. Hardly notice anything. Hardly notice that through all this Ruthie has been humming some dimly recognisable melody.

We've kissed good-bye, I've watched them set off on the short walk to school, I've got a cup of tea and a ciggie and I'm slumped in the kitchen chair exhausted. And it's a full ten minutes before I realise what the melody was. I'm out of the door and running wildly towards the school. I catch up with her in the playground and she's surprised and slightly startled and even amused that Dad should be in the playground wearing slippers.

"Quickly," I say, "just quickly hum me a few bars of that tune." And suddenly I'm jumping up and down in the playground, shrieking with delight because from only the briefest of hearings one of my kids has picked up a melody of mine. I'm shouting "Hummable, hummable," over and over again.

About a year later, *Blood Brothers* having opened, audiences and critics having responded more kindly than they had in my dreams, I was driving to Wales with the family. The car radio was playing and a song from *Blood Brothers* was introduced. I reached across to turn up the volume when from the back of the car a small voice said, "Oh not that bloody song again." I went to say: "Ruthie! Don't swear." But fair's fair. I slipped in a cassette of her favourite nursery rhymes and we carried on to Wales singing 'Lavender's Blue' and 'Cock-A-Doodle-Do.'

Willy Russell

I Want To Write A Musical

For years I'd wanted to write a musical. Not the book of a musical or even the lyrics and the book. I wanted to write a musical - book, lyrics *and* the music. Now there's cheek! Book? Well, yes. Lyrics? Possibly. But the music? I could quite understand the objections, the pitying looks of disbelief. I'd got no record of writing music for the theatre and I had to admit that yes, it's quite true, during my school days a succession of music teachers had contributed to my annual reports comments such as: "Shows absolutely no interest", "If he continues with this subject next year I will be forced to tender my resignation", "We will consider it an achievement if he learns to play the stereo."

No wonder that years and years later when asked casually at parties or in bars what I was working on, the reply, 'A musical,' would invariably provoke the response, "Ah. And who's writing the music?"

Feebly, apologetically I'd whisper, "Me."

"Pardon?"

"Me," just as feeble, inaudible. A cough and the word repeated, unintentionally loud, "ME . . . me."

By which time, of course, I was talking to no one but myself. Which is as it should have been because I really had no one to convince other than myself. It was true, I had for many years, before I'd even put a foot inside a theatre, written and performed hundreds of songs. I clutched onto this historical fact like a drowning man clutching at a floating potato chip packet. I might have written hundreds of songs but I couldn't ignore the fact that every single one of them was quite unknown. Even the few that were recorded passed, quite unnoticed, into the oblivion of instant deletions.

And I want to write a musical, am indeed, somewhere in the middle of it when my wise and crazy agent, after listening to my passionate I've-bee-writing-songs-for-years speech, fixes me with her fork and says, "Yes dear boy, but this is the theatre, and in the musical theatre you must, absolutely *must* be hummable. To not be hummable in the musical theatre is nothing less than treason! Well dear?"

"What?"

"Are you? Hummable?"

That night, a nightmare consisting of a million snippets from likely reviews, one in particular ringing in my ears as I wake, bathed in sweat:

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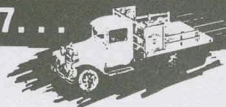
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Conference of the Birds
Spring 1995



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Fall 1996

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